To: Charlotte Butler, Holly Voorhees-Carmical

Re: Summary of DASSC Writing Inquiry 2012

Date: May 21, 2012

From: Stevi Quate

**Over the school year, literacy coaches, teachers, and district literacy leaders from Aurora, Douglas County, and Cherry Creek explored the following questions:**

* What does writing look like in the 21st century world of work as seen through a disciplinary lens?
* What are the implications on writing instruction based on the common core with its emphasis on the 21st century skills?
* What does it mean for students *as writers* to be “post-secondary workforce ready”?
* What is the current state of writing instruction and, given the above questions, what are the implications for educators?

**Our inquiry included:**

* Presentations from invited speakers, including Jacoline Beanne from Northrop Grumman; Fayette Augillard, Program coordinator for Colorado School of Public Health; Dan Clemens, independent consultant and author of *A Perfect Season*; and Dr. Angela Sauaia, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Public Health, Medicine and Surgery University of Colorado Denver School of Public Health.
* Presentations from school practitioners who have integrated 21st century skills into their instruction: Joe Dillon, APS literacy coach;  Kim McMonagle, Douglas County’s Director of Educational Technology ; Theresa Hemming and Christine Funk, Douglas County high school teachers; and Chrissy Kopatich, Douglas County teacher and winner of Apple’s Challenge Award.
* Study of a variety of reports and articles. See the wiki: <http://writinginquiry.wikispaces.com/21st+Century+Dispositions>

**Key insights to be shared with colleagues:**

* The Common Core standards reflect the writing skills needed in the world of work.
* For career advancement, writing is a critical skill.
* Content area teachers and English teachers have distinct roles in preparing students for the post-secondary workforce:
  + The role of the English teacher is to teach students *how* to write, including ways to gather information, analyze audiences, and edit their work. The English teacher should help students become flexible writers so that they can adapt to the multiple demands of writing in the post secondary world.
  + The role of the content area teacher is to become familiar with the formats, genres, and conventions for writing within their discipline and to provide multiple opportunities for students to practice writing through the disciplinary lens.
* Curricular needs:
  + Attend to how different disciplines have unique expectations for genre, form, conventions, and style.
  + Include more mentor texts so that teachers have models of authentic texts for modeling and for classroom study; this includes more documents from the world of work.
  + Include more authentic writing assignments with readers outside of school.
  + Expand the scope of writing assignments so that the teachers assign much more writing than the literary analysis essay.
  + Continue to explore the role of technology and writing.